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CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

REPORT

OF THE

ELECT COMMITTEE

ON THE

POSTMASTER-GENERAL'S REPORT.

Ordered, by the House of Assembly, *to be Printed.*
APRIL, 1856.

CAPE TOWN:
PRINTED BY SAUL SOLOMON & Co., 63, LONGMARKET STREET
NEAR ST. GEORGE'S-STREET.

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CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

Select Committee

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REPORT

OF

THE SELECT COMMITTEE on the Postmaster-General's Report, appointed by the House of Assembly on the 26th March, 1856, consisting of Messrs. Bowker, Paterson, Meintjes, Pote, and Molteno.

YOUR Committee have to report that, having carefully gone into the changes and alterations of the postal routes recommended in the report of the Postmaster-General, submitted to the House, they have found that, to consult the convenience of the country, and to show a due regard for the public expense, they must entirely deviate from the suggestions of that officer, in submitting an arrangement of routes which will meet the requirements of the colony, and at the same time not press too heavily upon the public resources in being carried into effect.

The system of routes, as completed and recommended by your Committee, is explained at length in detailed description given below, and the House will learn from the evidence of the Postmaster-General, thereto attached, that the arrangement of routes now laid down by your Committee commends itself entirely to his approval, and that he will be prepared at once to carry out the same, so soon as it is adopted by this House and sanctioned by Government as the system of routes henceforth to be followed.

Explanation of Routes.

In order to render intelligible the system of routes upon which your Committee have thus unanimously agreed, they beg to submit the following, by which the different lines may be followed up, and the accuracy with which they are timed to each other ascertained. In this explanation, the Committee would take Port Elizabeth as the starting point, from which they would ask the House first to follow them along the eastern routes.

The upward Cape post is due at Port Elizabeth at 1 p.m.

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Tuesday, but does not generally arrive till 4 p.m., which the Committee take as the starting hour for this line. Then the post reaches Graham's Town at 6 a.m. Wednesday, lies there till 12 noon, thus allowing Graham's Town time to open letters and to write anew to any places a-head; leaves Graham's Town 12 noon Wednesday, reaches Bedford 10 p.m. Wednesday; here gives off Somerset and Graaff-Reinet, &c., posts by branch to Somerset, the direct post proceeding to Cradock, which it reaches at 8 a.m. Thursday; leaves at once, and reaches Burghersdorp at 2 a.m. Friday, and Aliwal at 8 a.m. Friday. Returns from Aliwal at 1 p.m. Friday; reaches Burghersdorp at 7 p.m. Friday, Cradock 1 p.m. Saturday, Bedford 10 p.m. Saturday, Graham's Town 8 a.m. Sunday, in abundant time to proceed by Graham's Town post for Cape Town, which leaves the former place at 6 p.m. Sunday, and reaches Port Elizabeth at 8 a.m. Monday. By this line it will be observed that all the points passed through on this line can receive replies to letters within the seven days.

The Committee do not go over the eastern frontier lines, as these are not to be disturbed in the system they recommend.

They invite the House to follow them next along the northern routes; and starting in this case from Port Elizabeth on Wednesday, at 12 noon, they reach Somerset viâ Zuurberg on Thursday at 10 a.m., where the Graham's Town mail for Graaff-Reinet, viâ Bedford, has just arrived, to be carried on by the Port Elizabeth upward mail, to reach Graaff-Reinet at 12 p.m. Thursday; here taking up any northern mails from Beaufort (West), Cape Town, &c., which have been lying at Graaff-Reinet from the previous Monday, and carrying all on to Middelburg, which it reaches at 2 p.m. Friday, and on to Burghersdorp, which it reaches at 6 a.m. Saturday,—branch posts having gone off to Colesberg and Richmond, from Middelburg at 3 p.m. Friday, and reaching the former places at 2 a.m. Saturday. The return mail from Richmond and Colesberg will start at 6 p.m. Saturday, which will bring them into Middelburg at 4 a.m. Sunday, in time for the Burghersdorp downward mail, which will leave that place at 12 noon Saturday, reach Middelburg at 4 a.m. Sunday, and Graaff-Reinet at 6 p.m. Sunday; Beaufort (West) at 6 p.m. Monday, and Cape Town at 6 a.m. Thursday,—in time to be replied to by the Cape upward northern

mail, which will leave Cape Town on Thursday at 12 noon, reach Beaufort (West), Saturday 12 p.m., and Graaff-Reinet, Sunday 12 p.m. But at Graaff-Reinet the downward northern mail, which, as above shown, had arrived there at 6 p.m. Sunday, now starts on the arrival of the Beaufort (West) mail, at 12 p.m. Sunday, for Somerset, which the post will reach at 2 p.m. Monday, and Port Elizabeth, at 12 noon Tuesday, in time for the Cape upward mail to Graham's Town, to carry along with it mail packets from Beaufort (West) and Graaff-Reinet, &c. for Graham's Town to the latter place, which it reaches at 6 a.m. Wednesday, and where time is then allowed for the recipients of such letters, to open the same and to reply to them by the Graaff-Reinet upward mail from Graham's Town, which proceeds from the latter place, as already set forth, at 12 noon on Wednesday, by way of Bedford and Somerset.

By these routes, every point passed through by the northern post will be enabled to communicate with every other point within the seven days. Beaufort (West) will receive replies to its letters from Graham's Town and Port Elizabeth in nine days, and from Cape Town within the seven days, while Victoria (West), which is at present separated four weeks in time from Port Elizabeth, its seaport, will, by a branch post running to and fro between it and Beaufort, likewise, by the new arrangements, be brought so close to Port Elizabeth as to receive replies within fourteen days.

Nor would your Committee close this report without adding, in conclusion, that while under the new system of routes, the greatest convenience of the greatest number of places will be consulted, a very considerable saving on the whole will be effected, as will appear from the subjoined statement of contracts :—

Cost of new Posts.

From Zuurberg to Somerset	£250	0	0
,, Graham's Town to Bedford	175	0	0
,, Bedford to Cradock	215	0	0
,, Middelburg to Burghersdorp ..	500	0	0
,, do. to Colesberg	250	0	0
,, do. to Richmond	300	0	0
,, Beaufort to Graaff-Reinet	500	0	0
Total of new routes	£2190	0	0

Abolished Routes.

Port Elizabeth to Graaff-Reinet	£1475	0	0
Graham's Town to Somerset	300	0	0
Somerset to Cradock	280	0	0
Beaufort to Richmond	435	0	0
Richmond to Graaff-Reinet	450	0	0
Richmond to Colesberg	365	0	0
	£3305	0	0

leaving a balance of £1200 in favour of new routes.

Your Committee also believe that a further very important retrenchment under the head of the postal department might be made in the abolition of the third post a-week from Cape Town to the frontier, and unless there are other reasons to be adduced why it should not be abolished than those which have occurred to or been brought to the attention of the members of your Committee, they would recommend that so soon at least as the present contracts expire, a return should be made to the two posts a-week from Cape Town to the frontier.

R. M. BOWKER, Chairman.

Committee Rooms, House of Assembly,
April, 1856.

PROCEEDINGS OF COMMITTEE.

Tuesday, 1st April, 1856.

PRESENT:

Mr. BOWKER, in the Chair.

Mr. Meintjes,	Mr. Molteno.
Mr. Paterson,	

Committee in deliberation. Adjourned.

Friday, 4th April, 1856.

PRESENT:

Mr. BOWKER, in the Chair.

Mr. Paterson,	Mr. Pote,
Mr. Molteno,	Mr. Meintjes.

Committee in deliberation, and resolved to ask leave of the House to sit on Monday next, at 10 a.m. The Postmaster-General to be requested to attend to give evidence.

Monday, 7th April, 1856.

PRESENT:

Mr. BOWKER, in the Chair.

Mr. Molteno,	Mr. Paterson.
Mr. Pote,	

Postmaster-General called in, and examined.

Adjourned till to-morrow, at 10 a.m.

Tuesday, 8th April, 1856.

PRESENT:

Mr. BOWKER, in the Chair.

Mr. Meintjes, | Mr. Paterson.

Report considered and adopted.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Mr. *J. A. le Sueur*, Postmaster-General, called in, and examined.

Mr. *J. A. le Sueur*, Postmaster General. 7th April, 1856.

1. *Chairman.*] It is proposed by the Committee to recommend the following arrangements:—Abolish the present direct post between Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet, at an expense of £1475 per annum; to extend the present post line from Port Elizabeth to Zuurberg, on to Somerset, so that the Port Elizabeth letters for Graaff-Reinet will go by that line, with an additional allowance of two hours' time, but a probable saving of £1200 per annum, as we find that line is now complete, with the exception of a ten hours' break between Zuurberg and Somerset, and which the Committee think would not, at the utmost, exceed more than £250.—The only objection I could urge against the change is, that by abolishing the line between Port Elizabeth and Graaff-Reinet direct, a number of places on that line would lose the present advantage of having letters, &c., delivered and taken up there.

2. What are those places?—I do not remember all the places by name, but I have a list of them in my office.

3. What provision did you contemplate to make for those places when you recommended that the Graaff-Reinet post should pass through Graham's Town?—I did not think those places of sufficient importance to be taken into consideration in deciding upon the general post lines; and I do not think it a sufficient objection to the post now recommended *via* Somerset. I have only thrown out the objection to avoid it being said that I lost sight of the interest of anybody whilst giving my opinion on the subject.

4. Do you generally agree with the Committee in the recommendation with regard to the eastern lines as a whole, and now explained to you upon the map?—I do.

5. Do you generally agree with the Committee in the recommendation with regard to the new middle post lines, now explained to you on the map?—I do.

Mr. J. A. le Sueur, Postmaster-General. 7th April, 1856.

6. By these arrangements the posts through Beaufort will require to be altered as to lines and times, and the Committee recommend, as to line, that the direct road from Beaufort and Graaff-Reinet be taken, by which the times will be altered, as by memorandum: can you state any serious objection to the recommended alteration in time and lines?—I see no serious objection.

TABULAR STATEMENT of the time required for completing a Communication between the undermentioned places :—

	Aliwal (North.)		Beaufort.		Bedford.		Bredasdorp.		Colesberg.		Cradock.		Graaff-Reinet.		Middelburg.		Richmond.		Somerset.		Smithfield.				Bloemfontein.		Victoria.	
	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.	D.	H.
Cape Town	11	12	6	18	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	11	12	18	12	18	12	13	12
Port Elizabeth	5	18	9	12	5	18	5	18	6	0	5	18	6	0	6	0	6	0	6	0	11	18	13	0	13	0	13	0
Graham's Town	3	18	10	18	3	18	3	18	6	18	3	18	6	18	6	18	6	18	6	18	10	0	13	12	13	0	–	–
													Cape T.															
Graaff-Reinet	8	0	8	0	4	0	3	12	3	12	3	12	11	12	3	12	3	12	4	12	10	12	10	12	10	12	–	–

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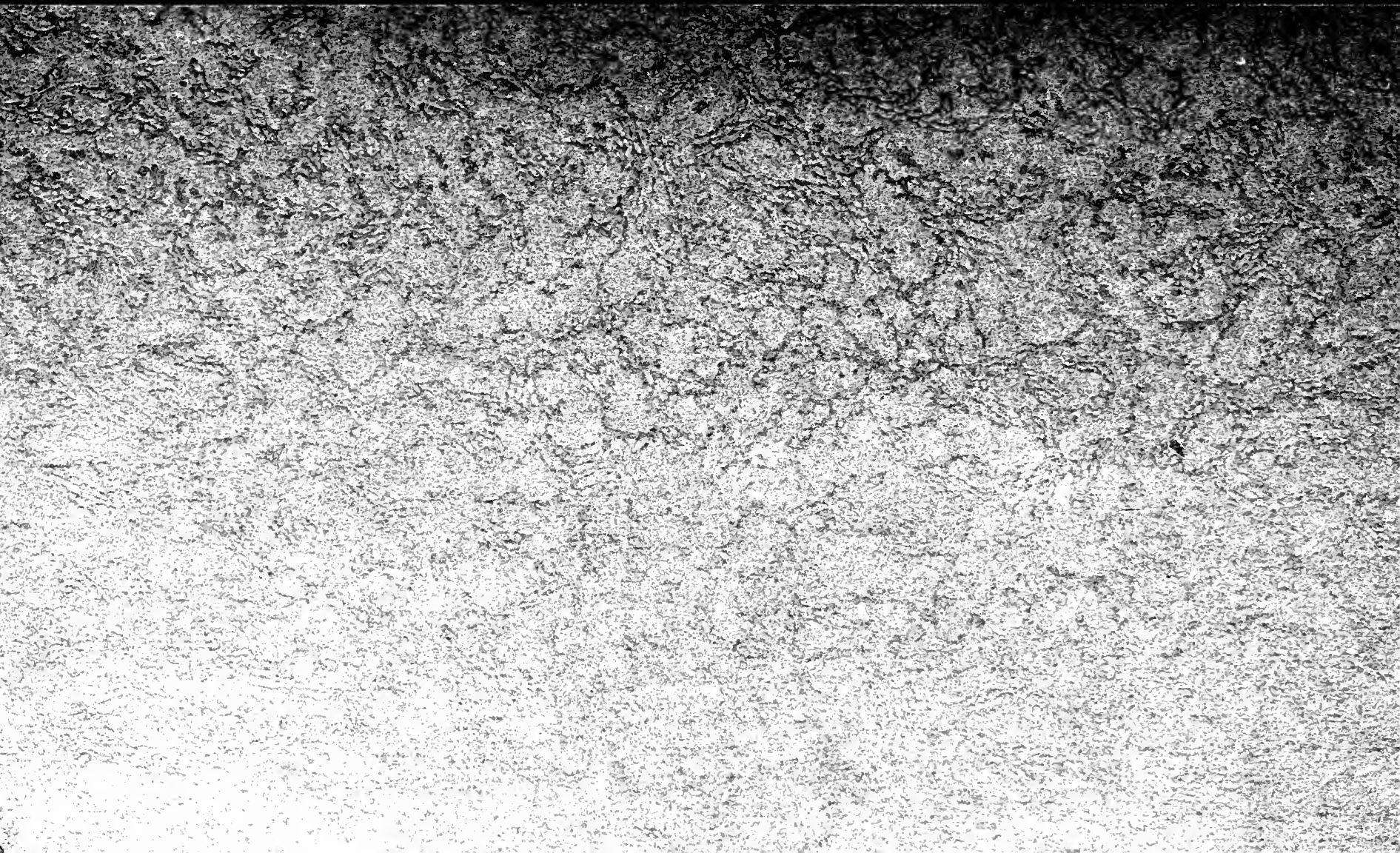
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